

On the Absence of *Ammodramus lecontei* from Chester County, South Carolina, during the Winter of 1885-86.—Mr. Brewster's mention, in the July number of 'The Auk,' of the capture of an example of Leconte's Sparrow in the lower section of the State, during the past winter, is of special interest, owing to the fact of its apparent absence in the vicinity of Chester C. H., where it has been a common and regular visitor for several winters past. Being desirous of fixing the date of its arrival, I began to look for it during the latter part of October, and continued my search with great thoroughness through the entire winter, but not a single specimen was seen. The early part of the season was unusually mild, and the Grasshopper Sparrow was found up to the 14th of December—an incident hitherto unnoted in the Piedmont region. January brought the severest weather known for years. As the Arctic wave came from the northwest, giving a temperature 10° lower in Chester than in New York, I expected Leconte's Sparrow with confidence, and kept constantly afield, but without success. It is worthy of remark that during this peculiar stress of weather the Horned Larks and other boreal birds, which frequently favor us with their presence during protracted cold, were wholly wanting.—LEVERETT M. LOOMIS, *Chester, S. C.*

Occurrence of *Ammodramus caudacutus nelsoni* in Massachusetts.—The Nelson's Finch was originally described by Mr. Allen, from near Chicago, and has been supposed to be strictly confined, in the breeding season, to fresh water marshes. Recently Mr. Ridgway has called my attention to specimens of this race from the salt marshes of Cambridge, Mass., which raise some interesting questions in regard to this form. The specimens are three in number, collected by myself as far back as 1871. Two were taken October 7, and their occurrence at this season, though interesting as adding a new bird to the Massachusetts list, need not occasion surprise, since the bird has been taken frequently near Sing Sing, New York, by Dr. Fisher, and is known to occur elsewhere on the Atlantic coast during the fall migrations.

The third specimen, however, occupies a different status. It was taken May 31, the lateness of which date would seem to preclude the possibility of it being a migrant. In fact, if I am not mistaken, I took eggs, supposed then to belong to *caudacutus* proper, on the very day in question.

The specimen appears on comparison to possess all the characteristics of the inland race, and though not so typical as some examples from Chicago, is scarcely to be distinguished from others.

The occurrence of this single specimen on the coast at this season may of course be entirely accidental. The bird may have drifted in, and finding the locality to its liking, may have remained to breed, mating perhaps perforce with one of the coast form. Those having Sharp-tailed Finches in their collections will do well to examine their series thoroughly with a view to the elucidation of the status of the two forms.—H. W. HENSHAW, *Washington, D. C.*